



Many children with hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy also have [speech delays](#) or disorders that impact their ability to form words, speak clearly, or process language. In these cases, a speech-language pathologist is one resource that parents can turn to for support in helping with a child's speech development. Speech-language pathologists are highly trained professionals that can help children develop their communicative skills, and - if needed - can help selective augmentative and adaptive communication technologies to help individuals who are nonverbal.

Speech-language pathologists can often be found in the hospital setting, though the overwhelming majority are employed by local schools and school districts. Some can also be found in local physical therapy offices and long-term care facilities.

How Can a Speech-Language Pathologist Help?

Speech-language pathologists (SLPS, or speech therapists) primarily work with children who have trouble articulating or understanding speech, though they also play a critical role in helping children with certain motor disorders learn how to eat, chew and swallow, as the muscles of the face, neck and throat play critical roles in all of these tasks. Their roles are often fairly broad, and encompass such varied areas as:



- [Speech Articulation and Intelligibility](#) (how well a child is able to physically produce words and sounds, as well as how well other people are able to understand them)
- Expressive Language Skills: How well a child can navigate the rules and systems governing communication, such as semantics and syntax.
- Receptive Language and Listening Skills: How well a child listens to and understands



language.

- Stuttering and Speech Fluency: How smoothly a child can speak; control of vocal tics.
- Voice and Resonance: Developing workarounds for physical differences that impact the vocal folds, such as vocal cord paralysis.
- Social/Pragmatic Language: How a child changes their language in response to different social situations and settings, follows the rules of conversation and communicates for different purposes.
- Cognitive-Communication Skills: Communication skills based in cognitive processes; SLPs can help children build compensatory strategies to help overcome some speech difficulties.
- [Augmentative and Alternative Communication \(AAC\): Systems](#) of communication that can supplement or relate verbal speech for those who cannot speak verbally.
- Swallowing, Feeding and Chewing: Because the muscles used for eating and speaking are similar, SLPS are often trained in helping with both.

Learn More About Speech-Language Pathology:

- [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association: What to Look Out For](#)
- [Late Bloomer or Language Problem?](#)
- [Delayed Speech and Language Development](#)